

AN
APPEAL
TO
CHRISTIANS
OF
EVERY DENOMINATION;
RESPECTING
THE LATE DISPUTES
AMONGST THE
METHODISTS.

BY THE
MEMBERS of the NEW CONNEXION,
IN
Huddersfield and its Neighbourhood.

Every one that doeth evil abhors the light;
But he that doeth truth cometh to the light.—
By their fruits ye shall know them.

NEW-TEST.

HUDDERSFIELD:
PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE SOCIETY.

УЧЕБНИК ПО

СТАТИСТИКЕ

ПРИМЕНЕНИИ К ПРАКТИЧЕСКОМУ

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AN APPEAL.

WE, the society of Methodists, in Huddersfield and its neighbourhood, who have united with what is called the New Connexion of Methodists, are sorry that we are obliged to make this appeal to the public; but the necessity of it appears to us from two considerations: First, the attack made upon our characters, as honest men, from the press, the pulpit, and in private: Secondly, the desire of persons, not immediately connected with us, for a statement of the case; many things having been misrepresented. We, therefore, think it our duty to comply, by giving, as far as we are able, a just and impartial statement of matters of fact, with a few observations, that the public, in general, may be enabled to judge for themselves.

For some years past, numerous things have happened, tending to alarm the methodist connexion, and causing many of its members seriously to consider their state and danger. Several united, to remove the cause of the evils with which, as a body, we were threatened; but their efforts proved in vain. One cause for alarm was, what is termed, the London Law Suit:—as far as we were able, at that time, to judge of its nature, from what appeared in the public prints, and the behaviour of the superinten-

dant preacher at Huddersfield, G. G——n, it amounted to this question, Whether the Trustees or the Conference had a legal right to the chapels? and in this we find we were not mistaken.

The conduct of the preacher, above alluded to, was as follows: While the above-mentioned suit was in chancery, he commanded the Trustees for Huddersfield chapel, to bring their books and settle them before him; and observed to the trustees, That they were no masters there, but the conference were. One of them asking him the question, What are we?—he answered, CYPHERS.

Another of our superintendants, Mr. B——r, at a meeting held in the chapel, in August, 1797, on that matter being agitated, was desired to give an explanation of the suit. He observed, Two things were tried, and a third in dispute was agreed; but one of the causes tried, was to the point in hand, and the decision proved the Trustees WERE NOT CYPHERS in the eye of the law. The following were the particulars:—The Conference had occupied, for some years, a part of the trust premises, as warehouses, for the use of the printing business, and, while Mr. Wesley lived, the Trustees made no demand of the rent; because, when they fell short of money to defray the expences that came against the places, Mr. Wesley made up the deficiencies; but after his death, that resource being cut off, they made a demand; it was disputed, tried in chancery, and given in favour of the Majority of the Trustees.* The ground upon which the Conference claimed a right to the chapels will hereafter appear.

* The suit was tried in the name of the minority, who had espoused the cause of the Conference.

Another circumstance that tended to raise an inquiry in the minds of many societies, was an address from Newcastle upon Tyne, in the beginning of the year 1796, which was sent to Huddersfield and other places. Its contents were read and examined in a quarterly meeting, and unanimously approved of; our two ministers, Mr. B—r and Mr. L—s not excepted. Mr. B—r declared, in the meeting, that, He had seen, for ten years back, the necessity of what it recommended.—In that address, speaking of the conduct of the Conference to the societies, as being contrary to scripture, and the natural order of society, they say, “ We know but of two precedents to countenance it; the one is the papal authority, the other tyrannical civil governments; both these assume a power of dictating to their people, and require implicit faith, and passive obedience.” We make this short extract, in order that persons, who have never seen that address, may form some judgment what the quarterly meeting and our two preachers, at that time, thought of the conduct of the Conference.—What further caused the societies, in many places, to stand forward and remonstrate with the Conference, was a pamphlet published by one of their body, Alexander Kilham, with the treatment he met with before, and at the Conference held in London, 1796.

In that pamphlet, the author endeavoured to point out the evils which we, as a body, laboured under, with the causes of them, and proposed a remedy, &c. for which he was expelled the connexion. At the same time, the Conference made three rules, which gave great offence to many societies. The first respected local preachers,*

* By local preachers are meant those persons who, in general, follow some calling or business, and preach on the sabbath days.

forbidding them to preach the gospel in any circuit, but that in which they lived, except they produced a certificate or recommendation from the circuit they left, and gained the full consent of the superintendant preacher of the circuit they entered. So that if a local preacher resided on the border of a circuit forty miles in circumference, and a friend of his, in another, desired or invited him to preach at his house, if it were not half a mile from the place, the full consent of the superintendant must be obtained, though he might be at the distance of twenty miles, or a positive law of the Conference be broken.

The second respected the liberty of the pres., and stood thus : " That as the preachers are eminently one body, nothing should be done by any one individual, which would be prejudicial to the whole, or any part thereof. Therefore, no preacher shall publish any thing but what is given to the Conference, and printed at our own pres. The book committee to determine what is proper to be printed."

N. B. The book committee are the persons that chiefly manage the affairs of the connexion.

The third rule ran thus, " To prevent unruly or unthinking persons from disturbing our people, it was ordered, That no man, or number of men, in our connexion, shall circulate letters, call meetings, or attempt to do any thing new, till it has first been appointed by the Conference."

We would just observe, with respect to these three rules, that the first evidently tends to increase the authority of superintendant preachers over their local brethren;

—as for the second, they well knew some of the preachers, besides A. Kilham, had written upon subjects not agreeable to them ; and, that the people, in many places, had great cause to be dissatisfied with the conduct of the Conference. But, in order to prevent information in that way, it seems they agreed, to have no more published than what the ruling preachers thought proper to be printed.—What an instance of toleration !—It is natural to suppose, nothing would be thought proper that tended to endanger their authority.

After they had given such power to the superintendants over their local brethren, and secured the preachers, they, in a most unjustifiable manner, fell upon the liberty of every individual member of the connexion, absolutely forbidding them (in the third rule,) to circulate letters, or any number of them meeting together, in order to take into consideration the things that peculiarly concerned them, except the Conference first appointed it. Other things have given the societies much concern, but these we deem sufficient.

When we, with several other societies, considered the the growing power and influence of the Conference, and the encroachments made upon our civil and religious liberties, we considered it our indispensablae duty to stand forward, and, in concert with them, endeavour, by all the peaceable means in our power, to have matters put upon such a foundation, that the Conference and people, jointly, might become “eminently one body;” so that the interest of the people should be that of the preachers, and the very appearance of separate interests banished from amongst us. We now lay before you the steps we have taken to accomplish this desirable end.

The first was a meeting, at Huddersfield, of a few brethren, to take into consideration the propriety of calling a general meeting of the circuit, in order, that the sense of the whole society might be had, respecting our then situation ;—it was thought necessary, and a short address drawn up, and sent through the circuit, earnestly entreating our brethren to attend in the chapel at Huddersfield, on the 28th of October, 1796 ; accordingly the meeting was attended by persons from various parts, and, after mature deliberation, it was resolved, almost unanimously, that an address, to the connexion at large, should be drawn up, (expressive of the sense of that meeting,) and circulated amongst the societies.

In that address, we stated our grievances, and the regulations we conceived proper for our future peace and prosperity ; and endeavoured to prove, that what we desired, was consistent with the scriptures, and could not, therefore, reasonably be denied.

Numerous are the evils which flow from inordinate ambition, and that hateful source alone was productive of all those which afflicted us.—Nothing less than acting independently of the people, in almost every thing, would satisfy the Conference ! nothing less than being what they style themselves, “eminently one body.”

There was, at that time, no fixed positive rule for a preacher to consult the society, either with respect to the admission or exclusion of members, so that many have been the injuries occasioned by the conduct of some preachers, expelling members without the knowledge of the society, or even the persons so excluded being spoken to, respecting their faults, real or supposed. The preach-

ers have exercised, as their right, the appointing of persons to, or removing them from, offices in the church; such as leaders, stewards, &c. also the choosing of others to be members of their own body.

The manner of selecting persons for travelling preachers, was in general as follows: A superintendent preacher recommended, to the Conference, whom he thought proper to become one of their body, (no other recommendation being necessary;) and many have been so appointed, to the surprise of the societies from which they have been taken. If this open door to disorder and death had been the only grievance we laboured under, it was sufficient, (if properly considered,) to make the whole connexion, as the voice of one man, insist on its being shut, or properly guarded.

On the Conference plan, the societies have no voice in the choice of their ministers, directly or indirectly. District meetings and conferences, for making or executing laws or rules for the whole body, were secret meetings, as it respected the people: no society, nor all of them jointly, being permitted to have a single voice there. And however unscriptural and oppressive such laws or rules might be, the people must obey, or be subject to the censure of the Conference. To shew that some of them have been both, we refer the reader to the three rules abovementioned. The public collections, viz. the yearly and Kingswood, have been entirely of their disposing, without any satisfactory account being given of the expenditure, to the people from whom it had been collected: * and when we considered that eighty pounds.

* We are ready to acknowledge, that the Conference, in the year 1796, (after Mr. Kilham had published his pamphlet against abuses,

had been lost in passing through the hands of a few of them, we thought the people ought to know what became of their money, by having a voice in the disbursement of it. These are a few of the grievances we laboured under, with the consequences that attended them.

We shall now state the particulars which we desired might be adopted, for the peace of the connexion; and if the Conference had agreed to them, or something similar, we are bold to affirm, that the division in the methodist connexion would not have taken place. With respect to the reasonableness of them, the reader may judge;—they consist of eight particulars.

1. Let positive laws be enacted by the Conference, that no person shall be received into, or excluded from, the connexion, but by the concurrence of a meeting of the leaders, &c. called for that purpose.
2. That no leaders or stewards shall be appointed to, or removed from, their office, but by the concurrence of the major part of a full leaders' meeting.
3. That no person shall be allowed to exercise as local preacher, without the approbation of the major part of a full leaders' meeting; and that no person receive a plan, as a local preacher, until he is mentioned and approved in a quarterly meeting.
4. That no person shall go out to travel, under any pretence whatever, until he is both mentioned and approved by the leaders and quarterly meeting.

&c.) began to give a detailed account of the expenditure of the yearly collection, but it proved so erroneous, that they gave a second edition with amendments!

5. That no person, received on trial, shall be admitted into full connexion, without being recommended by the two last circuits where he has travelled, expressed in writing, from their quarterly meeting to the district meeting and the Conference.

6. That no circuit stewards shall be appointed to, or removed from, their office, without the concurrence of the quarterly meeting; and that no steward abide longer than two years in that office, unless in particular cases, mutually agreed upon by the brethren who are present upon the occasion.

7. That two or more delegates, chosen by the people, without the least interference, directly or indirectly, from the preachers, be appointed by each circuit, to attend the district meetings, possessed of equal powers with the preachers, and required to assist in transacting all the affairs which are brought into those meetings. And,

8. That these delegates, when assembled together at a district meeting, shall elect two or more, from their body, to attend the Conference. These delegates shall possess equal powers with the preachers, in every respect; they shall carry in all the public collections, and assist in disbursing them: no new laws or rules shall be made without their concurrence; and all the laws and rules respecting discipline, that already exist, shall only be binding, by being revised with their special sanction; particularly those laws and rules made since the death of Mr. Wesley.

Previous to publishing the address, above alluded to, at a leaders' meeting, called upon a certain occasion, at Huddersfield, between the district meeting and the Con-

ference, in 1796, among other subjects, a conversation took place, relative to a regulation in our church affairs; in the former part of which we were led to hope for some redress, but, before the conclusion, we had much discouragement. Our superintendent preacher, Mr. B—r, speaking upon the yearly collection, declared he would not take it to Conference, except he had a note from the circuit steward, specifying the sum; adding, if he might have his mind, no money should come into the hands of a preacher, but be taken by the delegates, and that they should sit in Conference, till all temporal business was settled, at the least; and said he, "We have agreed, in our district meeting, that five or seven delegates be admitted into it." But Mr. L—s said, "No, brother, you are mistaken; you know it was proposed that five or seven be admitted, but it was objected to, on this account, viz. That, if so many were admitted, we (that is, the preachers,) could not carry our point, so it was agreed for—a number." On the minute being read, it was found as the secretary of that meeting, Mr. L—s, said; and we commend him for his honesty in that case.

"We could not carry our point!" What could these words imply?—Whence their fear?—Can preachers of Christ Jesus tremble in such a manner? Have they cause for wishing their actions to be benefited by concealment? We could not forbear considering the above as a plain, undisguised acknowledgment, that district meetings and Conference have points to carry, that are opposite to the interests of the people. We ask, Is it right for ministers of the gospel, who profess to preach Christ Jesus the Lord, and themselves the servants of the churches, for his sake, to attempt to carry any points which they well knew would be opposed by the people, if they were suffered to enjoy their privileges as mem-

bers of a christian society ; and who, it may reasonably be supposed, would not object to any point being carried which they were convinced would be really beneficial.

At another meeting, before the address was published, Mr. B——r, who called it, was present ; and, on the rules before-mentioned being brought forward, declared his disapprobation of one of them in very strong terms. He said, before he would submit to it, he would have his arm cut from his body ; and at the next conference, which was to be at Leeds, he would vote for it to be given into the hands of the common hangman, to be burnt. How changeable, how inconsistent is man ! Let Mr. B——r look to his behaviour, and endeavour, if possible, to reconcile it.—It will, in this place, be just to observe, that, at the same time, Mr. B——r objected to two things in our conduct : one was, admitting Mr. Kilham to preach in the chapel, after his expulsion ;—the second was, publishing our address, or at least doing it so long before the meeting of Conference ; observing that nothing could be done before then, and perhaps we might become cool, and nothing be done ; and he could wish us to gain what was wanted.

The Trustees were well persuaded that Mr. Kilham was an injured man, and that for pleading the people's cause, and could not, with a good conscience, reject him :—as for publishing our address, and so early too, we were conscious that societies making application singly would avail very little ; but the more that came forward, the greater the probability of success. After the address was published, as we knew little more could be done till the meeting of Conference, the business in a great measure rested, and perhaps some persons might suppose we had lost, (as had been thought we might,)

our zeal in the cause; but we had seriously weighed the matter, and were thoroughly convinced, that, if some effectual measures were not adopted, the same evils which had proved ruinous to churches in former ages, would, from like causes, fall upon us.

A little before Conference met, a meeting was called, in order to appoint persons to attend at Leeds, to act in conjunction with others sent from various parts of the kingdom. At the time appointed, the persons so authorised met, and, after much deliberation, sent their requests, in writing, to the Conference, which were nearly the same in substance as the eight particulars above-mentioned. They received an answer, in writing; the following is a copy.

" Dear brethren,

" We received your letter, and it was read in
" the Conference, and the inclosed is the answer.

In behalf of the Conference,

We are affectionately yours, &c.

T. COKE, President,
S. BRADBURN, Secretary."

The inclosed was an address to the methodist societies, in which there was an account of some regulations they had made, which were good as far as they went; but what the Conference gave up may be compared to the lopping off a few luxuriant branches, while the root was left entire and strongly guarded; for they refused the societies any admission into district meetings and Conference. The veil was still kept up between the people and them, and it seems they were determined

(whatever might be the consequence) to act in this respect as heretofore, independently of the people.

As to their making and executing laws for the whole body, they pretended to have given up some of their power to the people; the reader may judge. They enacted, should the Conference make a new rule, a major part of a quarterly meeting, in conjunction with the preachers, may refuse to be subject to it for one year; but if the Conference see good to confirm it, the next year, "it shall be binding upon the whole connexion." We ask, did the Conference, in reality, give up any of their undue power in this important respect? We might, upon a certain condition not be subject to a new rule for one year; but the Conference declared, if they confirmed it, we must submit, however injurious to religion, and whatever number of societies objected to it.

We ask any unprejudiced person, Would it not be much better, and more consistent with the scriptures, for the ministers and people to act in union with each other, and the partition wall laid even with the ground for ever?

After the requests of the societies were denied, we might reasonably have expected, the Conference would have given some reasons, why they could not agree to them, and those reasons founded upon the scriptures; but, to our astonishment, the reverse was the case; the common method was pursued, a flood of (what we hesitate not to call) persecution was poured forth, upon all those societies that dared to withdraw from the old connexion, on account of the Conference rejecting their proposals for a more solid union.

In their addresses to the brethren in Ireland and America, and other publications, they represent us as turbulent disturbers of Zion, as tares separating from the wheat, disciples of Thomas Paine, and enemies to our king and our country.

We inquire again, Could any proceeding be more inconsistent with their characters as ministers of the gospel of peace? as persons that preach to others the precepts of Christ Jefus? such as, If thine enemy be hungry give him meat, if thirsty give him drink; if ye love them that love you, what do ye more than others, for sinners love sinners; but I say unto you love your enemies, &c. Or could such a conduct be calculated to convince us of our error, (if in one,) or reclaim us from it? Surely not; on the contrary, it was a convincing evidence to us, that the steps we have taken were necessary. If our eyes had not seen, and our ears heard, we could not have thought it possible for them to have acted in the manner they have done.

In what degree they were blessed with the gift of discerning spirits, or distinguishing between the tares and the wheat, we presume not to say; but, believe them to be persons subject to like infirmities with ourselves, and in this respect may possibly err. We doubt not but many, who are represented in this light, if they had continued in the old connexion, and supported the Conference in their measures, would have been considered, in their building, as polished stones.

As for the other part of our character, any unprejudiced person might see through the design; but we were surprised to see "Fathers in Christ," descend to such mean and unworthy measures; for, with respect to some of their

appellations, we are much of the same mind as S. Bradburn, (the secretary who signed the addresses above alluded to, on behalf of the Conference.) In a sermon he published in 1794, preached at Bristol, from 2d Corinthians, viii chap. and 14 verse, "That there may be equality," we find the following remarkable passage, page 5th: "When we read in the history of England, " the names by which contending parties have distinguished each other, such as cavileers and roundheads, " petitioners and abhorters, whigs and tories, and " when we consider how odious any of these appellations rendered those to whom they were applied, in " the esteem of the opposite party, it will not be " thought a matter of indifference, by what names we " are called, or what phrases we make use of. Some " of these party names are now unintelligible, except " to reading people, and no passion is excited by their " being mentioned; but there are other words adopted " in their room, which are reciprocally applied with " equal virulence."

Query, With all S. Bradburn's reading (together with that of the rest of his brethren in Conference) of the history of England, &c. would it not have been much better if they had avoided the evils there related, and which he, in the sermon above-named, condemns, rather than have increased the dreadful catalogue?—Page 11, speaking of all men having an equal right to unlimited, uncontrouled liberty of conscience; we meet with the following declaration. "The man who would fine or imprison another for " praying or preaching [and we would add, for acting according to the dictates of his conscience, in leaving a christian society he was formerly connected with,] " would not scruple to carry his point further, nor be

" satisfied but with the death of those who opposed
 " him : burning them alive is only the same principle
 " operating with greater energy. It is in vain to urge,
 " that force may be of use to reclaim ignorant, refrac-
 " tory people : persecution may make hypocrites ; but
 " it never did, it never will make rational converts to
 " pure and undefiled religion. The utmost length that
 " mortal beings have any right to go, in striving to
 " make others think and act as they do, in religious sub-
 " jects, is to reason with, and persuade them, by affec-
 " tionate words and sound argument."

How *affectionate* were the words, how *sound* the arguments we received from Conference ! Has not S. Bradburn, &c. gone far beyond the bounds he here lays down ? Who could have imagined that this man, after publishing his sentiments, in such strong language, to the world, would have appeared in public, at the addressees above-noticed ? If we had not seen so many proofs of the inconsistencies of some preachers, we should have been more surprised than we were, had it been possible. " Thou, therefore,
 " who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself ?
 " Thou, that preachest a man, should not steal ; dost
 " thou steal ? "

Suppose a man were blessed with a numerous offspring, and, in process of time, a part of his family thought their father withheld from them some privileges they had a right to, and they state their grievances to him, and desire that those privileges might be granted ; but their father does not think proper to alter his conduct toward them ; in consequence of which, a part of his children withdraw themselves from under his immediate care. Suppose further, the father was to publish to the world, that those children were none of his, that they were

bastards and not sons, and was to endeavour to fix such a mark of reproach upon them, as to invite all persons, destitute of love to them, like himself, to do them an injury, what would all tender-hearted parents say of such a man? Would they not conclude, that he was destitute of every feeling peculiar to parents for their children? that he was void of humanity, and a monster in nature? It is easy to apply the above supposed case; but "Father forgive them," (it would be well if it could be added) "they know not what they do."

But to return. After the Conference had denied our requests, the persons authorised to treat with them, on behalf of the societies, with a few preachers, (who left them for conscience sake, and came to our help,) formed themselves into a regular meeting, and proceeded to business. Preachers were appointed by that meeting for various circuits, and the Conference was informed, they did not need to appoint any preachers, to supply such chapels as had been declared, in the meeting, for the new connexion, amongst which was the chapel of Huddersfield. The Conference notwithstanding appointed three preachers for Huddersfield circuit, as usual; and, from the conduct of some of them, it appeared that they were determined to preach in the chapel, against the will of the Trustees, and of the majority of the society, at Huddersfield and its neighbourhood.

After the Trustees were informed that the Conference had appointed such preachers, they came to this conclusion; as the travelling preachers supplied the chapel only every other sabbath day, and sometimes on the sabbath day evenings, they might preach as usual, and the preachers who were our choice, on the vacant days, so that it would be, nearly, as much at liberty for the one as the

other ; and had not the Trustees been driven, by the conduct of the preachers, to exert their authority, or give up the chapel wholly to the Conference, they would at that time have stood to their conclusion. This renders it necessary to give an impartial statement of the chapel, together with an account of the conduct of the Trustees respecting the same.

About twenty-three years ago, a few brethren engaged to build a place for the public worship of God; for the convenience and use of the methodists, in Huddersfield and its vicinity. They appointed a person to purchase the ground, and a chapel was erected upon it; and, with a little assistance from subscriptions, money begged in various parts, and money borrowed, for which they were responsible, the whole was completed. They then began to consider about committing it to trust, in order that it might be preserved, for the purpose for which it was built, to future generations. Accordingly a deed was executed, and, through the persuasions of some of the preachers, they got it settled upon what is called the Conference plan ; the substance of which was, and on which they found their right, that it should be for the use of Mr. Wesley, and the Conference, after his death, and no other. At the same time, the original Trustees, and, we think, other persons that subscribed any thing towards it, had not any idea of the chapel ever being claimed by the preachers, in the manner it has been ; but it appeared that the Conference considered the chapels, so settled, as secured to them ; and if the law had acknowledged a methodist Conference, they might have gained this point ; but the decision of the suit, at London, proved, that there was no provision for a Conference : in the eye of the law it was a nullity.

If the Conference had built the chapel, and settled it upon trustees, for the use of themselves and their successors, the charge of robbery, which has been brought forward, would have been just; but the case was quite different: the Conference was not at one farthing expence towards building it, nor responsible for any monies borrowed upon it. And here we would ask, Who appointed the original Trustees to their office of trust? Not the Conference; they had nothing at all to do in the business; and if the Trustees had been overpersuaded by some of the preachers, whose views were not of an honourable nature, to bind themselves to receive the preachers sent by the Conference, they have reason to be thankful, that the bond was not legal; and it is beyond dispute that they did nothing which was illegal in objecting to such preachers.

We are satisfied that, as they had no legal right to it, (their claim being of a legal nature,) they have no just claim upon it. The Trustees consider themselves in trust for the society at Huddersfield and its neighbourhood, and no other, and they have acted agreeably to the majority of the persons for whom they are in trust.

At present, there is a debt of four hundred pounds upon the chapels; and if the dwelling-house be united to it, as formerly, it will be two hundred pounds more; making, in the whole, six hundred pounds; and no persons whatever are answerable for any part thereof, but the Trustees, one of whom advanced the whole sum. All the money subscribed, and begged in various parts of the country, does not amount to two hundred pounds; nor can all the members of the old connexion, as subscribers, claim fifteen pounds: who then, we ask, has in justice the most right to the place? the Trustees and the society, or the

Conference? and what becomes of the charge of robbery, &c. so industriously circulated? With respect to the small sum subscribed by our brethren in the old connexion, we some time ago made a proposal to settle that business, as may be seen hereafter. We shall, in the mean time, give an account of the steps taken by the Trustees, respecting the chapel, and the alteration made in the original deed, as, it appears, this is one of the greatest charges brought against us.

In the year 1796, it became necessary to renew the deed, as the original Trustees were reduced, by deaths, below the number specified in it: and, at a meeting held at the chapel, on another occasion, a few weeks before the conference, in 1796, Mr. B——r addressed the Trustees in the following manner: “ It is time for you to “ renew your deed, as you are got below your number; “ and I would advise you, when you do it, to add a fresh “ clause, viz. that, in case there should be a division, and “ two conferences commence, you should have it in your “ power to choose from which you will be supplied.” Whether Mr. B——r had an eye to a division which had been expected, some time before, to take place among the preachers, or to that which has actually taken place in the societies, we cannot say; but it appeared to us, that he had some expectation of one, and, from the nature of the advice; we thought he meant to take the side against the old Conference. Whatever might then be his views, it was the first time any alteration was proposed; however, the matter rested as it was till after the memorable Conference held in London in 1796.

The steps taken by the preachers at that time, the opposition thereto, and not knowing what might be the issue, made the trustees act with more caution; and, as a

new deed was to be executed before the decision of the Conference could be known, they prepared, as well as they could, for the worst that might happen.

The original deed being considered not perfectly legal, it was thought necessary, in order that the chapel might be secured for the purpose for which it was built, that the surviving original Trustees should make a legal surrender of all the premises back again, into the hands of the person they at first appointed to buy the ground. It was done accordingly, and a new deed executed, and the premises legally secured for the use at first intended.—Notwithstanding the principal alteration made in the deed was, that the Trustees should not be bound to receive the preachers sent by the Conference, agreeably to the advice given them by Mr. B——r, with only this difference, they did not bind themselves to any Conference; yet, after he, and other preachers were objected to, as agents of the Conference, strange as it may appear, he, in a neighbouring chapel, represented the Trustees, although they had followed his advice, as worse than highwaymen.

The circumstance which obliged the Trustees to refuse the preachers sent by the Conference, was as follows: Preachers being appointed, to the Huddersfield circuit, by the new connexion, agreeably to the major part of the society, one of them, (W. Thom,) having arrived, notice was given that he would preach in the chapel, in the evening; but Mr. B——r, although appointed to another circuit, objected to it. One of the Trustees asked him, if W. Thom might preach when he had done, but that favour could not be obtained; and from other declarations, made at a public meeting held in the chapel, by Mr. B——r and Mr. H——d, it plainly appear-

ed to the Trustees, that they must either use their authority, or the preachers in the new connexion must not preach at all; therefore they consulted with each other, and came to this resolution, that the preachers sent by the old Conference should not preach in the chapel any more; and they were informed of the same. In order to carry their resolution into effect, with as little confusion as possible, they put a lock upon the pulpit door, that the preachers might see, as well as be informed of their determination.

On the next sabbath day morning, our minister went into the pulpit, and the door was locked:—a few minutes afterwards, Mr. B——r came in, and went to the door, as usual, although he knew what had been done the day before. In the afternoon, before the time of preaching Mr. B——r, had taken possession of the pulpit; for, by climbing up, he, with assistance, got over the top, and preached that time. After which the Trustees locked up the chapel; and, in the evening, Mr. B——r preached in the chapel yard, and our preacher in Mr. Lockwood's; thus ended the opposition respecting the chapel.

Another difficulty now presented itself, (amongst the many we have had to surmount,) namely, a dwelling house was necessary to be had for our preachers; and as there were two furnished, belonging to the place, we thought it reasonable that one of them should be delivered up to the Trustees, for the above purpose. As both were in the possession of the others, every peaceable method we could devise was made use of, in order to avoid any disagreeable measures being adopted by the Trustees. For some time we were given to understand, that they would remove as soon as possible, &c. When nearly six months had elapsed, and no satis-

tory answer could be obtained, the Trustees, seeing no prospect of its being done in a peaceable way, sent each of the preachers a legal notice to quit the premises.

Being thus circumstanced, we were in a strait what to do: if we engaged a house it would want furnishing, and we knew we had not only a right to the possession of the houses, but to so much of the furniture at least, as would have been sufficient for us; which we hope soon to make appear. A few furnished rooms were taken for them, at upwards of twenty pounds per year, although the houses we had a right to, as a society, were not let for fourteen.

Agreeable to the notices sent to the preachers, the premises were quitted, but we are sorry to say, in a manner disgraceful to the christian name, for they *stripped both the houses, nearly of all their furniture.* They left in the house furnished in 1794, occupied by J. Drake, one cupboard, and one small shelf in the cellar; if they had taken the cupboard it would have let some shelves down which were fixed in the wall. In the house occupied by G. Highfield, the only things left, worth mentioning, were one cupboard, two barrels, one old night stool, and an old window curtain; had the cupboard been taken it would have injured the paper, as part of it is fixed to it. There are two fixtures besides, but they could not be removed. And so much were they afraid of leaving what was moveable, that they even took away the ashes and the dung, belonging not only to themselves but to T. Goldthorp and John Todd. From the assurances made to us, (after the houses at Nottingham had been stripped on a moon light night,) we might have expected a more honourable conclusion, and that they would not have done any thing, that re-

quired darkness to cover it, but, alas! it still remains a truth, Men love darkness rather than light, who find themselves disposed to do evil. Had it been just to take away the furniture, they might as well have done it by day, as by night, for the Trustees had long before agreed to make no opposition, whether they took a part or the whole. And we can say, we are more concerned at the reproach brought upon christianity, by such mean actions, than for the loss of the goods. Well may the deist triumph; ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, may labour in the pulpit as hard as they please, to convince them of their error, but, we are persuaded, nothing more confirms them in their sentiments, than the unchristian-like conduct of many professors of christianity—certain ministers in particular.

On the 29th of August, 1798, some of the Trustees were informed that they had been for several nights removing furniture, and that on the next morning they intended to finish the laudable busines: through mere curiosity, one of the Trustees rose early, and went to the place about four minutes past four o'clock;—in less than five minutes afterwards, several persons came out at the gates, laden with goods; what length of time they had been at work he could not tell, possibly all night.

Persons had assembled from various parts, miles distant, with as much zeal as if in this work they were doing the Almighty some essential service. Indeed, the zeal manifested by them on this occasion, brought to our recollection a metaphor, which had been made use of by G. H—d, to some of the Trustees, viz. that their circuit steward, J. W—d, had his irons ready hot. We could not then tell what he meant by the expression, except in reference to the goods.

The latter, however, was there, with his tools, who showed they were every way qualified for the intended work, by pursuing measures, which might be compared to irons, heated as hot as ignorance* and prejudice could well make them.

As noticed before, we hoped to make it appear, we had some right to the furniture; in order to which, it may be necessary to give an account of the original furnishing of both houses, what they cost, &c. as nearly as can be ascertained, because more furniture had been got for the house first furnished than in the original account.

The house out of which Mr. Highfield remov-	L. S. D.
ed was furnished in the year 1780, and cost	{ 50 8 4
That out of which Mr. Drake removed, fur-	{ 52 1 3
nished in the year 1794, cost	

Whole original cost, £. 102 9 6

Money subscribed towards furnishing the first house,

By collection in the circuit,

	L. S. D.
By Mr. Snowden	16 7 0
By Mr. Hampson	3 1 4
Small sums in Huddersfield	2 14 0
By a Friend, (deceased)	3 3 0
	<hr/>
Total £.	25 5 4

* By ignorance, is not meant a want of mental abilities, but, which is worse, wilful ignorance. One of the persons who had come about nine miles to assist, declared to a member of the new connexion, who was reasoning with him, after the business was done, on subjects relative thereto, that, "he did know nothing, and would know nothing." Those are the men whom certain characters find it their interest to fix on for the accomplishment of their designs; and who, determined not to weigh the subject on both sides the question, are the most forward to make free with our characters.

By the members of the new Connexion.

	L.	S.	D.
Thomas Goldthorp	10	0	0
Trustees	12	0	0
Mr. L——d, decidedly in our favour,	3	3	0
	<hr/>		
	£.	25	3 0

The second house, furnished in 1794, was defrayed by subscriptions, by the brethren in Huddersfield, Shelly, Holmfirth, and Thong.

By the members of the old and new Connexions, jointly.

	L.	S.	D.
Shelley	13	10	2
Holmfirth	12	17	0
Thong	10	10	6
	<hr/>		
Total £.	36	17	8

By the members of the new Connexion.

	L.	S.	D.
At Huddersfield	15	3	6
	<hr/>		
	25	3	0

£. 40 6 6

Now if what the members of our connexion have subscribed at Shelley, and other places in the circuit, were added to the forty pounds six shillings and six-pence, we suppose it would make the whole fifty pounds, or thereabouts; so that we had, as a society, a just claim to about half the furniture.

As it has been reported by our brethren that the settling of the goods had been proposed by them, to be put to arbitration, we lay before the reader an account of what has passed between us upon the subject; had it been proposed to us, to have put the matter to indifferent persons, we should clearly have accepted it;

but no such proposals were ever made. In order that the whole may appear plain, we shall give an account of the proposal made by us to the subscribers to the chapels in our connexion, as reference is made to it in what will appear hereafter. After the preachers, sent by the old Conference, were not admitted to preach in the chapel at Huddersfield, the charge of dishonesty, &c. were brought against us. In consequence, an address was published to the trustees in the old connexion, dated March 10th, 1798, signed by the trustees of Huddersfield and Nottingham chapels, in which the following proposal was made.

“ Let the members of the old connexion, who have
 “ subscribed to our chapels, come with an account of
 “ the money which they have paid towards them, and
 “ we will pay it back, on condition, that the trustees
 “ of the old connexion shall pay the money back,
 “ which the members of the new connexion have sub-
 “ scribed to their chapels, and which are shut against
 “ the preachers of the new itinerary. Lastly*— That
 “ the business may be fairly conducted, let a certain
 “ number of friends be chosen by the trustees of the
 “ chapels in dispute, both by the old and new con-
 “ nexion, to examine the accounts of the subscribers,
 “ and settle the sums that ought to be paid to the Trus-
 “ tees of every chapel, and let their determination be
 “ FINAL.”

In order that some conclusion might be made respecting the furniture in the dwelling houses, we made ap-

* If the associate trustees should, at the next Bristol Conference, think proper to appoint a committee of their body to fix the plan of this business, we will appoint a committee and act with them for the same purpose.

plication to the preachers and other persons concerned, but could obtain no satisfactory answer; in the next place we appointed a meeting to be held in the chapel, and gave notice to our brethren in the old connexion, principally concerned, to attend, but none of them attended; afterwards three of the trustees waited upon them at one of their quarterly meetings, to inquire about the giving up of the houses, and what they thought respecting dividing the furniture. An answer was prepared in writing respecting the furniture, and read to them by one of the brethren, (as they were not allowed to have it;) the substance of which was, (as it referred to the goods,) that it appeared, from written documents, that somewhere about three hundred pounds, had been subscribed toward the chapel, and when the trustees thought proper to divide that money, they would divide the goods. With respect to the above answer we observe, if they had any documents at all, in which the above sum appeared, we are ready to declare them false: the proposal made to the subscribers as above, we apprehend to be a sufficient answer to what they say has been subscribed toward the chapel. In this state the matter rested, till the trustees received the following letter.

" Brethren,

" The sundry papers, which have been sent to
 " sent by you to Mr. Highfield, have been duly laid
 " before us, and considered. In order that every thing
 " may be done in the most upright manner, we have
 " formed a committee of the trustees of the chapels in
 " this circuit, and certain persons appointed by the
 " quarter day, as the proper representatives of the peo-
 " ple, and consist of the following persons,

" Eli Hobson,
 " Joshua Moorhouse,
 " Edward Hardy,
 " John Hardy,
 " James Dyson,

} Trustees for the chapels.

" Matthew Butterworth,
 " Thomas Littlewood,
 " John Wood,
 " William Bolton,
 " George Dyson,
 " John Brook,
 " Benjamin Hardy,

} Persons appointed by the
 quarter day, as the pro-
 per representatives of the
 people.

At a meeting held at Sepley, on Monday, July 2, 1798, of the above persons, it was resolved that the following letter be sent to the trustees of Huddersfield chapel.

Shepley, July 2, 1798.

" Brethren,

" In a printed address, dated March 10, 1798,
 " you proposed a plan of accommodation, in order to
 " prevent the public in general, and the members of
 " the old connexion in particular, from fixing upon
 " you the charge of dishonesty, in taking the chapel at
 " Huddersfield, from them, and expelling their preach-
 " ers. If in your address you mean to include the whole
 " methodist connexion, the plan cannot be brought to
 " effect; but would be very far from thinking you
 " woud propose it, because of the impossibility of its
 " being brought to operate; therefore we think you
 " can have no objection to your own plan being brought
 " into narrower limits, i. e. that you will confine it to
 " this circuit as it stood before the division took place,
 " and, in that case, are prepared to meet you, having
 " formed the said committee to settle the businels of

" this circuit, both as it respects * Huddersfield, Shelley,
 " and Lindley chapels, and the goods in the houses.
 " That the accounts of the contributions which have
 " been made towards building the chapels, &c. be pro-
 " duced at a proper meeting to settle the whole. We
 " request, you will be so kind as to appoint such per-
 " sons, as you think proper, to meet us in the chapel
 " on Shelley Bank-Bottom, on Thursday, July 19th,
 " 1798, at two o'clock in the afternoon. We are in-
 " duced to act thus, to prove to you and the world,
 " that we intend to act according to the gospel we pro-
 " fess to believe.

" Our reason for appointing the meeting in Shelley
 " chapel, is because we think it the most central, but
 " if you prefer any other place we will endeavour to
 " attend.

Signed in behalf of the meeting,

JOHN WOOD.

" P. S. Direct your answer to Mr. Wood, and let
 " him have it as soon as possible, that he may have
 " time to signify it to us."

The following was the answer sent to the above letter.

* These three chapels mentioned are all in the new connexion. Our plan it seems can operate where they think there is a prospect of receiving, but, on the contrary, it cannot be brought to effect. It should be considered, we do not view ourselves, in this circuit, in any other light than a part of the body with which we are connected; the letter was considered, from the proposal made, only as a kind of cover or excuse, to make the way for removing the goods.

" Brethren,

" We have considered the contents of your letter, dated Shepley, July 2d, in which you propose to reduce our plan, and confine it to Huddersfield circuit, as it stood before the division; but as the Nottingham trustees, &c. are joined with us in our printed letter, we cannot consent to narrow our plan; because we do not intend it to extend through the whole methodist connexion, but only so far as the new itinerary has spread. And we think that the associate trustees (not the trustees of any particular chapel or circuit) are competent to settle the business of the whole at once, by appointing a committee to act with another chosen by us. But we will lay your letter before our quarterly meeting, on Monday, 23d July, and let you know their opinion of the business."

Accordingly their letter was laid before our quarterly meeting, and considered, and the conclusion was to abide by their proposal made in their printed letter. As such a few lines were sent to them, we have not a copy by us at present, but the whole was nearly in substance as follows: That they should abide by their proposal made in their printed letter; believing it to be consistent with that golden rule, of doing to others as they would be done unto. In answer to which we received the following letter.

" Brethren,

Hud. July 31, 1798.

" We received your letter, dated Huddersfield, July 23, in answer to ours, dated Shepley, July 2, in which we propose to meet you, to make a final settlement of the chapels, and the household

" furniture in dispute, in this circuit.—We take this opportunity to inform you, as you, in your letter to us, signify, that you do not intend to enter into the business respecting the chapels, agreeable to the proposals made by us; we think it unnecessary to meet about the furniture only, as we wish to make a final settlement of the whole business, when we do meet; and we hope, according to that excellent rule you mention, namely, the doing unto others as we would they should do unto us.

Signed in behalf of the committee,

JOHN WOOD, Circuit Steward."

After they had removed the goods, in the manner before-mentioned, we, on the same day, received the following letter.

" Brethren, Hud. August 30, 1798.

" As Mr. Highfield assured us he would deliver up the houses, at the time your notice required, we thought it our duty to remove the goods into our new house, as the people had committed them to our care. We have left some things of value, which we might have removed, and shall be ready at any time, to receive any proposals from you, respecting the goods, as proposed in our letter, dated July 2d, 1798.

We are yours affectionately,

JOHN WOOD,
JOSHUA MOORHOUSE,
GEORGE DYSON, and
JOHN BROOKE."

" P. S. We will settle the rent of the houses, and
" deliver you possession, as soon as you please."

On the above letter we would just remark: Had the people they speak of, any right to commit to their care, that which was only theirs, in part; and had the persons, whose names are at this letter, any right to receive the same, only in part, and remove nearly the whole? and when that was done, insult (for we cannot look upon it in any other light,) the brethren thus injured, by telling them, they have left some things of value they might have removed, when scarce any thing they could take away was left, as may be seen above. This is all the correspondence we have had worth mentioning, respecting the furniture.

We cannot but remark a few things, in the first letter received from our brethren, respecting the household furniture.

They think we cannot object to have our plan brought into narrower limits, *i. e.* that we will confine it to this circuit, as it stood before the division took place; and in that case are prepared to meet us, in order to settle the business of this circuit, as well with respect to the chapels of Huddersfield, Shelley, and Lindley, as the goods in the houses. Then an account of the contributions, which have been made towards building those chapels, &c, to be produced.

Had we consented to narrow our limits to this circuit only, are the proposals made by our brethren consistent with ours made in the printed letter, where we offered to pay back to the *members* of the old connexion what they subscribed to our chapels, provided they would re-

turn to us what we subscribed to theirs? We should have thought it absurd to have proposed to the trustees of their chapels, to have brought an account of what had been subscribed to them, both by the members of the old and new connexions, and by persons not connected with either. For instance, what right have we at Huddersfield to claim any part of the money subscribed to the chapel at Holmfirth, if any, by persons that are not in either connexion? On the same ground, what right have the society at Holmfirth to claim any part of the subscriptions made to our chapel, by persons who are not in either connexion, or who are dead?—We think neither side has any right, further than that they and we have subscribed to them.

They then say they wish to prove to us and the world, that they intend to act according to the gospel they profess to believe.—Whatever their intention was then, we know not; but how they have done is well known: if we have any knowledge at all of the gospel, we think they have opposed its precepts, whether we consider the act itself or the manner of it.—Admitting that the Trustees had robbed them of the chapels, &c. would that have justified them in —— also?

Thus have we given a faithful and impartial account of the whole affair, as far as we are able, not withholding, designedly, any thing that might appear unfavourable to us, in the steps we have taken, respecting either the division or the chapel.

P. S. It has been said, we did not want an union, but a division, than which nothing can be further from the truth. What a few individuals might desire, we cannot say; but the contrary was the desire of the society in ge-

neral. Some of the persons, who probably may have been considered the most warm in the cause, have frequently declared, they would have done any thing in their power, consistent with truth and a good conscience, to have prevented a division. Nothing but the obstinacy of the preachers was the cause of the division; and the trouble we have experienced on the occasion, has caused some of us many sleepless hours, when otherwise, we should have been laid in silent repose. Some of us have frequently declared in private, and we now do it in public, If it can be proved, that we desired any thing unscriptural, and unreasonable, upon conviction, we will immediately renounce our error; but if that cannot be done, we desire peaceably to enjoy the liberty of conscience, which the scriptures and the laws of the land allow.

Would it not have been more consistent with the characters of ministers of the gospel, the servants of churches, nobly to have invited the dissatisfied in some language like this: "Brethren, let us seriously examine the subjects in dispute, by the word of God, and if we do exercise any power over you, not warranted there, we will cheerfully resign it. If you are deprived of any privileges you have a right to, as christians, we will no longer be the cause thereof." We say, would it not have been much better, than to have acted in the manner they have done? and would not such a conduct, if followed, have been greatly to their honour, and have gained them the full confidence and esteem of the whole connexion?

We submit what we have said upon the disagreeable subject, to the public, and perhaps if their minds had not been previously prejudiced by the odious appell-

lations bestowed upon us by our brethren, both in public and private, they would have been better qualified to have judged impartially. Above all, we commend ourselves to the protection of that God, who has appointed a day, in which he will judge the secrets of men's hearts by Jesus Christ, and when a just and impartial distinction will be made between the tares and the wheat, between the hypocrite and the sincere christian; when every thing that can trouble the follower of the Lamb shall be for ever removed. And we pray that the time may speedily come, when the spirit of persecution, (although under the mask of zeal for the cause of God,) shall be banished from the earth; and when possessors of Christianity, of every denomination, shall (as they ought) love, and seek each others welfare: and manifest as much zeal for the honour of Christ, and the increase of his kingdom, as has been manifested to increase the number of disciples to a party.



A P P E N D I X.

WE have lately seen a circular letter, from the Conference, saying, that the chapel at Huddersfield was built by the subscriptions of THEIR friends, in *various* circuits.—In what circuits, and by what friends, such subscriptions, as assisted the said work, were raised, may be seen, by referring to p. 21, 22.—It ought to be remembered, that great numbers, who *were* their friends, have, from the impropriety of their conduct, been reduced to the necessity of opposing them.

They further add, that the deed not being enrolled in chancery, (which, at that time, THEY did not consider as necessary,) the Trustees had taken advantage of that circumstance, and altered the same.—The alteration was first recommended by one of THEIR friends; and whether the Trustees acted as they ought, the reader will perceive, on perusing p. 22.

We have stated the reasons for expelling their preachers from our chapel; but the Conference, to make our behaviour, on that occasion, appear inhuman, describe us as *turning them out*, at the same time, from the chapel and dwelling-house.—The fact is, they remained

their new dwelling was ready; nor were they then turned out, but left, *in the night*, as described in p. 25, 26.

Charitable donations might be solicited, without awakening pity by misrepresentation. A just cause needs not its assistance. And we cannot forbear expressing our concern, that any persons should be so insensible of the importance of Truth, as to adopt measures which require the aid of Falsehood.

